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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of sex research models which measure adolescents' feelings of political alienation is investigated and discussed and a new model is formulated. The six models include life dissatisfaction, personal depreciation, critical perceptions of political reality, irrational beliefs, perceptions of political threat, and cognitive simplicity (which posits that if the individual attempts to understand the complex political system from a simplistic framework, faulty perceptions which foster feelings of political alienation occur). The sample consisted of 460 senior high school students who answered a self-administered questionnaire which included measures of all six models. Results indicate that the composite measures for the political reality, political threat, and personal depreciation models manifest almost equal influence on adolescents' feelings of political alienation. Also, the life dissatisfaction, irrational belief, and cognitive simplicity models have very little effect on political alienation. Thus, the new model, learned political helplessness, is based on the political reality, political threat, and personal depreciation models. An implication is that learned political helplessness among preadults can be prevented if the adolescent is provided with an experiential basis for believing that his efforts have an effect on the operation of his personal sociopolitical system and that threats from that system can be countered by his personal actions. (Author/KC)

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COGNITIVE-PERCEPTUAL FACTORS IN THE POLITICAL ALIENATION PROCESS: A TEST OF SIX MODELS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the relative effects of six sets of variables on feelings of political alienation are investigated: life dissatisfaction, personal depreciation, critical perceptions of political reality, irrational beliefs, perceptions of political threat, and cognitive simplicity. Political alienation is conceptualized as a cluster of four interrelated attitudes, i.e., political inefficacy, discontentment, cynicism, and estrangement. Zero order and partial correlations, controlling for the effects of parental education level, sex, race, grade level, and grade-point-average, support five of the six models, with cognitive simplicity being uncorrelated with feelings of political alienation among the 460 Evansville, Indiana high school students surveyed in May, 1975 for this study. Multiple regression results indicate, however, that personal depreciation, critical perceptions of political reality, and perceptions of political threat serve as the best predictors of political alienation among these adolescents. Finally, using these latter three indicators, a political helplessness model is formulated, tested, and supported. The implications of this model for the political socialization process are then briefly discussed.

Cognitive-Perceptual Factors in the Political Alienation Process: A Test of Six Models

> "What of the real present, the men-of-no-politics, the once-respectable Golden Mean? Obsolete; in any case, lost sight of. In a West of such extremes we can expect, at the very least, a highly 'alienated' populace within not many more years."[1]

Until recently, the concept of political alienation was frequently described but rarely explained.[2] During the past few years, however, two models have come to dominate theory and research on political alienation, particularly as it occurs among preadults. The first of these models, the social deprivation explanation, accounts for feelings of political inefficacy and distrust among preadults on the basis of social deprivation, which is held to engender low levels of self-competence, which, in turn, generate feelings of inefficacy and distrust. The second, and not necessarily alternative model, proposes that accurate perceptions of political reality, i.e., of personal powerlessness and of indifferent political leaders, naturally lead to feelings of political inefficacy and distrust.[3]

Empirical tests of the social deprivation model using both samples of white and black adolescents have repeatedly failed to support the model, primarily because of the untenable psychological assumptions inherent in the self-competence concept employed in the model.[4] Conversely, much greater support has been accorded the political reality formulation when it has been tested using samples of white and black preadults.[5] The greater explanatory power of the latter model is at least partially due to the more simplistic assumptions intrinsic to the model, as well as to its being more

system-oriented, in contrast to the more individual-oriented social deprivation model with its assumptions of personal disfunctioning.

While the political reality model is undoubtedly the more powerful predictor of feelings of political alienation among preadults, and perhaps adults as well, it provides only a partial explanation for the political alienation phenomenon. Thus, for example, the model is devoid of a motivational component; it does not adequately account for feelings other than those directly related to perceptions of powerlessness and unrepresentation such as feelings of estrangement from the sociopolitical system or feelings of discontentment with public policy alternatives. The political reality model, in other words, offers no rationale for the consequences, both attitudinal and behavioral, of supposedly accurately perceiving the socio-political system's functions and processes. In addition to these limitations, the political reality model also does not consider other cognitive and perceptual elements which may contribute to feelings of political alienation among individuals.

Besides the alienation-enhancing factors inherent in the social deprivation and political reality models, at least three other factors may contribute to feelings of political alienation among preadults and adults. This, then, is the primary purpose of this paper: to compare the explanatory power of six different models of political alienation antecedents among preadults. The first three of these models are incorporated in the social deprivation and political reality explanations. Thus, the life satisfaction model accounts for feelings of political alienation by referring to the individual's level of life satisfaction; the more a person's life is characterized by feelings of deprivation and dissatisfaction, the higher

the person's level of felt political alienation, especially if these feelings of deprivation and dissatisfaction have been politicized, i.e., these feelings of life dissatisfaction have been attributed to the workings of the sociopolitical system.[6]

According to the personal depreciation model, feelings of political alienation, i.e., inefficacy, distrust, policy discontentment, and estrangement, follow directly from low levels of self-esteem and a belief in external locus of control.[7] While the theoretical underpinnings of this model have never been fully explicated, it appears that psychodynamic and social learning assumptions are combined in this model, suggesting that perhaps the individual projects his own perceived personal characteristics onto the sociopolitical system and its dominant actors, while at the same time generalizing from his perceptions of personal powerlessness and concluding that both the sociopolitical system and himself lack adequate control over their respective destinies.

As noted above, the political reality model assumes that the individual is capable of accurately perceiving the dynamics of the sociopolitical system and, as a result, somehow reaches the affective state of political alienation. Again, however, it must be stressed that this explanation is fundamentally a variant of the S-R model, which does not stipulate the mediational processes linking the perceptual and affective domains. This model, therefore, lacks a motivational system which transforms the person's perceptions of systemic functioning into the person's feelings of systemic rejection.

One possible motivating force applicable to the political reality model is outlined in the political threat model. This model hypothesizes that one of the basic sources of motivation underlying feelings of political

alienation is psychological reactance, or the perceived actual or threatened loss of personal freedom.[8] According to this explanation, the individual not only accurately perceives the operations and functions of the socio-political system, but also associates these systemic perceptions with his personal life.[9] This model proposes that the individual need not directly experience detrimental consequences from the actions of the sociopolitical system or specific actors in the system; he may simply witness others' freedom being eliminated or threatened.[10] Similarly, the person can generalize from his perceptions of others losing specific freedoms to the loss of other freedoms on his part, at other times, under different circumstances.[11] This model then proposes that the individual responds to this perception of political threat, among other ways, by experiencing feelings of political alienation. And the greater the person's perception of political threat from the system, the greater the person's feelings of political alienation.

The fifth model to be subjected to empirical test concerns the nature of the individual's political belief system. To varying degrees belief systems embody both rational and irrational beliefs.[12] This model assumes that the more a person's personal and political belief systems exhibit an irrational component, the more the person is predisposed to feelings of political alienation.[13] Thus, for example, if the individual makes perfectionistic demands of the sociopolitical system and its leaders, expects the system's leaders to be overly concerned with his personal problems, believes that a perfect solution can be found for every problem, becomes extremely agitated and upset over the failings of the sociopolitical system, or demands a state of overdependence vis-a-vis sociopolitical leaders,

feelings of political alienation will naturally result.[14]

Finally, the cognitive simplicity model holds that the sociopolitical system is a very complicated mechanism, demanding a great deal of personal cognitive complexity for the individual to comprehend. If the individual attempts to understand such a system by relying on a simplistic cognitive system incorporating elementary constructs, the functioning of such a complex system will not be comprehended.[15] Because of the rudimentary state of such a cognitive system, many facets of the sociopolitical system will be misinterpreted, others will be distorted, and others will not be perceived at all. Such faulty perceptions and cognitions should, in most cases, foster feelings of political alienation.

Six models of political alienation antecedents, all basically psychological in nature, will be investigated here. To facilitate this enterprise, the following hypotheses will be tested.

H_1 Perceptions of life dissatisfaction will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_2 Perceptions of personal depreciation will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_3 Critical perceptions of political reality will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_4 Perceptions of political threat will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_5 Irrational beliefs will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_6 Cognitive simplicity will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

Sample. Data for this research were gathered by means of a written questionnaire, self-administered to a random sample of 460 Evansville, Indiana senior high school students in May, 1975. The sample was composed of 48 percent males and 52 percent females, of whom 91 percent were white and 9 percent were black. Fifteen percent of these students reported having grade-point-averages of A, 47 percent reported GPAs of B, and 38 percent reported GPAs of C or below. Thirty-one percent of their parents had less than twelve years of formal education, 38 percent were high school graduates, 12 percent had attended some college, and 20 percent of their parents were college graduates.

Conceptual Indicators. In operationalizing the concept of "life satisfaction" in this study, two indicators were used. First, a modified nine-step version of Cantril's self-anchoring striving scale was employed,[16] on which respondents were requested to place themselves on a ladder ranging from rung number one (their worst possible life) to rung number nine (their best possible life) for three separate time periods, the present (1975), five years in the past (1970), and five years in the future (1980). The initial measure of life satisfaction, therefore, was operationalized by summating the adolescents' response over the three points in time, with a high score, 27, signifying life satisfaction and a low score, 3, denoting life dissatisfaction. This measure attained a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70.

The second life satisfaction indicator consisted of a four-item scale measuring the respondents' comparisons of their families' situation compared to most people, their job opportunities compared to most people, their

income earning opportunities compared to most people, and their chances of finding satisfactory housing compared to most people.[17] Again, the respondents' answers across the four items were summated, with a high score, 20, indicating life satisfaction and a low score, 4, indicating life dissatisfaction. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.80; the correlation between these two measures of life satisfaction was 0.69.

The personal depreciation concept was operationalized through the use of three attitudinal scales, the first of which was Rosenberg's self-esteem scale:[18] 1) I feel that I'm a person or worth, at least as important as other people; 2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities; 3) I think I am a good person; 4) I certainly feel useless at times (Reflected); 5) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure (Reflected); 6) I am able to do things as well as most other people; 7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself; 8) I feel I do not have much to be proud of (Reflected); 9) I wish I could have more respect for myself (Reflected); and 10) At times I think I am no good at all (Reflected). This scale registered a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76.

Levenson's chance control scale,[19] with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.56, was utilized as a second measure of personal depreciation: 1) I have found that what is going to happen will happen; 2) To a great extent my life is controlled by accidential happenings; 3) It's not always wise for me to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune; 4) Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interest from bad luck happenings; and 5) When I get what I want, it's usually because I'm lucky.

The third indicator of personal depreciation used in this study was

Levenson's powerful others control scale,[20] which manifested an Alpha of 0.51: 1) Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me; 2) I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people; 3) My life is chiefly controlled by people who are more powerful than I am; 4) People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups; and 5) In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me. The mean inter-scale correlation between these three personal depreciation indicators is 0.39.

Three scales were used to operationalize the political reality concept.[21] The first of these measures, the perceived racial discrimination scale with an Alpha of 0.56, comprised five items: 1) Businessmen cheat black people more than they do white people; 2) Most laws treat whites worse than blacks (Reflected); 3) When they both commit the same crimes, blacks get shorter sentences than whites (Reflected); 4) Police treat blacks worse than whites; and 5) Political leaders take advantage of white people more than they do black people (Reflected).

The perceived economic discrimination scale achieved an Alpha of 0.65: 1) When they both commit the same crimes, poor people get longer sentences than rich people; 2) Political leaders take advantage of rich people more than they do poor people (Reflected); 3) Most laws treat the poor worse than the rich; 4) Businessmen cheat poor people more than they do rich people; and 5) Police treat poor people worse than rich people.

The third political reality indicator, the perceived democratic deficiency scale, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.60, was composed of nine items: 1) People like me probably believe in basic democratic principals more than our

political leaders do; 2) This country is becoming less democratic every day; 3) It's very disturbing to me that the interests of some groups of people aren't fully represented in our political system; 4) Although our government is supposed to be based on justice for everyone, it really isn't just at all; 5) I regret very much that there isn't more racial equality in this country today; 6) No matter what the civics books say, all people are not treated politically equally; 7) I'm very much concerned about many people in this country today not having as much political equality as they should; 8) Personal liberty is something that's only written about in textbooks, not something that really exists in this country today; and 9) Although I wish it were otherwise, no one in this country today has as much freedom as the Constitution says they should have. The mean inter-scale correlation between these three measures of the political reality concept is 0.34.

Two indicators were employed in measuring the political threat concept.[22] The first of these, the political sensitivity scale, exhibited a reliability coefficient of 0.66: 1) If the government wouldn't allow newspapers to print whatever they wished, I would be very disturbed; 2) I would feel very threatened if the government prohibited me from reading certain books or watching certain television programs; 3) If the government wouldn't permit me to vote in elections, I would be very angry; 4) If the government denied me the right to live where I pleased, I don't think I'd be too concerned (Reflected); 5) I would be very upset if the government denied me the right of free speech; 6) I really don't think I'd be too concerned if the government made it illegal for people to criticize our political leaders (Reflected); 7) I can't imagine getting upset over not being permitted by the government to support a particular political party in an election

(Reflected); 8) I would not be particularly disturbed if the government prohibited me from seeking certain kinds of employment (Reflected); and 9) I would feel very frustrated if the government wouldn't allow me to associate with or talk to certain people.

The political reactance scale, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70, was used as the second political threat indicator: 1) The way our leaders are running the country these days, I really feel threatened; 2) Sometimes I feel that the poor leadership we've had in this country recently is going to somehow threaten the kind of life I'd like to live; 3) I'm not going to be able to live the kind of life I'd like to live because of the way this country is being run; 4) I'm not as free to do some of the things I'd like to do because of the way this country is being run; 5) I feel personally threatened when I hear how our government is managing the economy these days; 6) I really don't see how the government could influence my life in any way (Reflected); 7) I don't view the government as a threat to my personal freedom (Reflected); 8) With the recent wiretapping and spying activities of the government coming to light, it's obvious that the personal privacy of all of us is threatened; and 9) Because of the government's handling of our economy, a lot of students like me won't be able to get jobs when they graduate. The correlation between the political sensitivity and political reactance scales was 0.36.

The irrational belief concept was measured by two scales,[23] the first of which, the personal irrationality scale, registered a reliability coefficient of 0.73: 1) I worry over possible misfortunes; 2) I worry about situations where I am being tested; 3) My feelings are easily hurt; 4) Sometimes I feel that no one loves me; 5) I find it difficult to take criticism

without feeling hurt; 6) I worry about little things; 7) Helping others is the very basis of life; 8) Other people's problems frequently cause me great concern; 9) I get terribly upset and miserable when things are not the way I would like them to be; and 10) It is very important to me when I do a good job to be praised.

The political irrationality scale, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.49, contained fourteen items: 1) The American people should rely more on their leaders; 2) There is a perfect solution to many of the major problems in this country today; 3) It probably is best for the American people not to need strong leaders to constantly rely upon (Reflected); 4) Today's social and political problems are not necessarily the result of past mistakes on the part of our leaders (Reflected); 5) If political events in this country do not turn out as planned, it's not a great catastrophe (Reflected); 6) Our political leaders needn't be perfect in every way (Reflected); 7) It is a terrible catastrophe when affairs in this country do not work out as we want them to; 8) There is always a right or perfect solution for every political problem, and it must be found or the results will be catastrophic; 9) The way some people in this country, such as blacks and Indians, are treated is just awful; 10) The past actions of our political leaders are an important cause of our failure to remedy our present difficulties; 11) Even if our present political situation is partially a function of our political past, the influence of the past can be overcome (Reflected); 12) Our political leaders must be perfectly competent and informed to deserve our respect and trust; 13) It isn't terrible if political affairs don't work out as we want them to (Reflected); and 14) One should be quite upset over political problems, such as war and international conflict. The intercorrelation between these

two irrationality scales is 0.34.

The cognitive simplicity concept was operationalized by using a shortened version of Bieri's modified Rep Test.[24] On this measure, respondents were asked to rate seven hypothetical individuals on the basis of seven bipolar attributes. The seven individuals included "Yourself," "Person you dislike," "Mother," "Friend of same sex," "Father," "Person difficult to understand," and "Teacher." A seven-step scale was used in assigning the bipolar adjectives: outgoing-shy, adjusted-maladjusted, calm-excitable, interested in others-self absorbed, cheerful-ill humored, responsible-irresponsible, and interesting-dull. This instrument was arranged so that the respondent was required to rate all individuals on a bipolar adjective scale before moving on to the next bipolar adjective scale; this procedure obviated the response set problem. "Cognitive simplicity" was then measured by totalling the number of matched bipolar adjective ratings for all seven individuals. This resulted in a response range of 10 (cognitive complexity) to 210 (cognitive simplicity), i.e., the higher the number of matched bipolar ratings across individuals, the less the cognitive differentiation evidenced.

Felt political alienation, the dependent variable in this research, was operationalized using four attitudinal scales, exhibiting a mean inter-scale correlation of 0.62. The first of these indicators, Olsen's political incapability scale,[25] measured feelings of political inefficacy: 1) I believe public officials don't care much what people like me and my parents think; 2) There is no way other than voting that people like me and my parents can influence actions of the government; 3) Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I can't really understand what's going on; and

4) People like me and my parents don't have any say about what the government does. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.49 was registered by this scale.

Olsen's political discontentment scale,[26] exhibiting an Alpha coefficient of 0.58, was used to operationalize feelings of policy discontentment: 1) As the government is now organized and operated, I think it is hopelessly incapable of dealing with all the crucial problems facing the country today; 2) It seems to me that the government often fails to take necessary actions on important matters, even when people favor such actions; 3) These days the government is trying to do too many things, including some activities that I don't think it has the right to do; and 4) For the most part, the government serves the interests of a few organized groups, such as business or labor, and isn't very concerned about the needs of people like my parents and me.

The third dimension of the political alienation concept was measured by the political cynicism scale of Agger, et al.,[27] which attained a reliability coefficient of 0.50. Six items comprised this scale: 1) Money is the most important factor influencing public policies; 2) Politicians represent the general interest more frequently than they represent special interests (Reflected); 3) In order to get nominated, most candidates for political office have to make basic compromises and undesirable commitments; 4) Politicians spend most of their time getting reelected or reappointed; 5) People are very frequently manipulated by politicians; and 6) A large number of city and county politicians are political hacks.

The political estrangement scale,[28] with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.64, was composed of the following four items: 1) When I think about government and politics in the United States, I consider myself an outsider; 2) I tend

to identify myself with and feel closely associated with American politics and government (Reflected); 3) When I hear or read about the politics and governmental system of the United States, I feel that I am a part of that system (Reflected); and 4) When I think about the government in Washington, I don't feel as if it's my government.

Results. The first hypothesis predicts that these adolescents' perceptions of their personal life dissatisfaction will be associated with feelings of political alienation, i.e., inefficacy, distrust or cynicism, policy discontentment, and estrangement. This hypothesis assumes a linkage between one's personal life satisfaction or dissatisfaction and the operation of the sociopolitical system which the original social deprivation model does not make.[29] Thus, in a sense, a certain level of ideological thinking is assumed in this model, for without making the causal nexus between his own life experiences and the role of the sociopolitical system in determining the quality of those experiences, the individual has no logical grounds upon which to manifest expressions of political alienation, unless they somehow represent a generalized form of malaise.

The correlations in Table 1 provide empirical support for the first hypothesis. It is apparent that both the perceived deprivation and comparison level indicators are associated with feelings of political inefficacy and estrangement among these adolescents. It must also be noted, however, that while these particular correlations are statistically significant, they in no instance account for more than five percent of the variance in the relationship with the political alienation indicator, nor do these perceptions of life dissatisfaction correlate with feelings of either political cynicism

TABLE 1. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LIFE DISSATISFACTION AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Social Deprivation	0.18	0.05	0.06	0.18	0.16
Controls: SES	0.16	0.04	0.04	0.17	0.14
GPA	0.16	0.05	0.05	0.17	0.15
Sex	0.18	0.04	0.05	0.18	0.16
Grade	0.18	0.05	0.06	0.18	0.16
Race	0.18	0.05	0.06	0.18	0.16
All variables	0.14	0.04	0.05	0.15	0.14
Social Comparison	0.16	0.03	0.02	0.20	0.14
Controls: SES	0.13	0.01	0.01	0.18	0.11
GPA	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.18	0.11
Sex	0.16	0.04	0.03	0.21	0.15
Grade	0.17	0.03	0.01	0.21	0.14
Race	0.16	0.03	0.01	0.20	0.14
All variables	0.08	0.03	0.01	0.16	0.10
Life Dissatisfaction Composite Indicator	0.20	0.05	0.05	0.22	0.18
Controls: SES	0.18	0.04	0.03	0.21	0.16
GPA	0.17	0.04	0.04	0.20	0.16
Sex	0.20	0.05	0.05	0.22	0.18
Grade	0.20	0.05	0.05	0.23	0.18
Race	0.20	0.05	0.05	0.22	0.18
All variables	0.14	0.04	0.05	0.18	0.14

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

or policy discontentment. This latter finding places in considerable doubt the politicization assumption intrinsic to the life dissatisfaction model, and, instead, suggests that feelings of political inefficacy and estrangement may to an extent simply be concomitant to perceptions of life dissatisfaction. Finally, it is noteworthy that the individual and simultaneous controls for categoric-demographic effects do not significantly alter the results in Table 1. Thus, the relationships between perceptions of life dissatisfaction and feelings of political alienation do not appear to be influenced by the adolescents' race, sex, parental education level, grade-point-average, or grade level.

According to the personal depreciation model, low self-esteem and external control beliefs should be related to feelings of political alienation. The correlations in Table 2 confirm this hypothesis. Perhaps the most interesting findings in the table concern the locus of control beliefs, which exert a uniform effect on all four political alienation indicators, whereas the self-esteem measure influences only feelings of inefficacy and estrangement. As in the preceding table, controls for race, sex, parental education level, grade-point-average, and grade level exercise no appreciable affect on these associations.

The third hypothesis is supported. Critical perceptions of socio-political reality, as long as they are devoid of a racial component, tend to be associated with feelings of political alienation among these adolescents. Indeed, in Table 3, all four dimensions of political alienation appear to be affected to a similar extent by perceptions of economic discrimination and of democratic deficiencies in the system. Interestingly, the categoric-demographic controls do not affect these correlations. Indeed, even the

TABLE 2. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONAL DEPRECIATION AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Self-Esteem	-0.22	-0.03	0.04	-0.24	-0.15
Controls: SES	-0.21	-0.03	0.05	-0.23	-0.14
GPA	-0.19	-0.02	0.06	-0.22	-0.12
Sex	-0.22	-0.04	0.04	-0.24	-0.16
Grade	-0.20	-0.02	0.03	-0.23	-0.15
Race	-0.22	-0.03	0.02	-0.24	-0.16
All variables	-0.16	-0.03	0.00	-0.20	-0.14
Chance control	0.30	0.30	0.22	0.30	0.38
Controls: SES	0.28	0.29	0.21	0.29	0.37
GPA	0.29	0.30	0.22	0.29	0.38
Sex	0.30	0.31	0.24	0.30	0.39
Grade	0.29	0.29	0.24	0.30	0.38
Race	0.31	0.30	0.24	0.30	0.39
All variables	0.26	0.31	0.28	0.27	0.38
Powerful Others Control	0.30	0.40	0.32	0.28	0.44
Controls: SES	0.28	0.39	0.32	0.27	0.43
GPA	0.28	0.40	0.32	0.27	0.43
Sex	0.30	0.38	0.31	0.28	0.44
Grade	0.30	0.40	0.33	0.28	0.44
Race	0.30	0.40	0.33	0.28	0.44
All variables	0.28	0.38	0.32	0.26	0.42
Personal Depreciation Composite Indicator	0.36	0.27	0.17	0.36	0.39
Controls: SES	0.34	0.26	0.16	0.35	0.38
GPA	0.33	0.27	0.16	0.35	0.38
Sex	0.36	0.27	0.17	0.36	0.40
Grade	0.34	0.26	0.19	0.36	0.39
Race	0.36	0.27	0.19	0.36	0.40
All variables	0.30	0.28	0.23	0.33	0.39

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

TABLE 3. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL REALITY AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Racial Discrimination	0.03	-0.06	-0.07	0.03	-0.02
Controls: SES	0.04	-0.05	-0.06	0.04	-0.01
GPA	0.03	-0.06	-0.07	0.03	-0.02
Sex	0.03	-0.05	-0.07	0.03	-0.02
Grade	0.00	-0.06	-0.05	0.01	-0.03
Race	0.03	-0.06	-0.03	0.02	-0.01
All variables	0.01	-0.06	0.00	0.01	-0.01
Economic Discrimination	0.19	0.36	0.45	0.16	0.40
Controls: SES	0.17	0.35	0.44	0.15	0.39
GPA	0.18	0.35	0.45	0.16	0.40
Sex	0.20	0.34	0.44	0.17	0.39
Grade	0.20	0.36	0.44	0.17	0.41
Race	0.19	0.36	0.45	0.17	0.40
All variables	0.21	0.34	0.42	0.17	0.39
Democratic Deficiency	0.34	0.57	0.41	0.32	0.56
Controls: SES	0.35	0.57	0.41	0.33	0.57
GPA	0.34	0.57	0.41	0.32	0.56
Sex	0.34	0.57	0.41	0.32	0.56
Grade	0.35	0.57	0.41	0.32	0.56
Race	0.35	0.57	0.42	0.32	0.57
All variables	0.36	0.58	0.44	0.32	0.58
Political Reality Composite Indicator	0.30	0.49	0.44	0.28	0.52
Controls: SES	0.31	0.49	0.44	0.28	0.52
GPA	0.30	0.49	0.43	0.28	0.52
Sex	0.31	0.48	0.43	0.28	0.52
Grade	0.30	0.49	0.44	0.28	0.52
Race	0.31	0.49	0.46	0.28	0.53
All variables	0.32	0.48	0.46	0.28	0.53

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

control for race does not alter the correlations between perceptions of racial discrimination and feelings of political alienation, suggesting that the black adolescents in Evansville are either responding on the basis of their experiential histories in southern Indiana or they have been "counter-indoctrinated" by their white counterparts. In any case, however, it is clear that over twenty-five percent of the variance in the composite political alienation indicator is accounted for by the political reality measures.

Equally strong support is accorded the fourth hypothesis. The data in Table 4 indicate, though, that feelings of political reactance serve as a better predictor of felt political alienation than do feelings of political sensitivity. In other words, the political threat to elicit feelings of alienation must be imminent, not hypothetical, and must be perceived as an actuality by the individual. In addition to the relatively strong association between the political reactance measure and feelings of political alienation, two other patterns are noteworthy. First, while the political sensitivity scale is related to a lesser degree with felt political alienation, it does correlate at moderate levels with the more "political" dimensions of the alienation concept. Similarly, political reactance also is most related to feelings of policy discontentment and political cynicism, not to the more "psychological" dimensions of inefficacy and estrangement. This suggests a rational element in these relationships; the Evansville adolescents appear to conceive of political threat as being manifested in the form of untrustworthy, inept politicians and inappropriate, unresponsive public policy, not to some generic conception of the system as "boogey-man."[30] Again, it should be emphasized that the categoric-demographic effects on these correlations

TABLE 4. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL THREAT AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Political Sensitivity	-0.08	0.21	0.32	-0.08	0.13
Controls: SES	-0.06	0.22	0.34	-0.07	0.15
GPA	-0.05	0.22	0.34	-0.06	0.16
Sex	-0.08	0.22	0.34	-0.08	0.13
Grade	-0.06	0.22	0.31	-0.06	0.14
Race	-0.09	0.21	0.30	-0.08	0.12
All variables	0.00	0.25	0.33	-0.02	0.19
Political Reactance	0.37	0.58	0.46	0.30	0.58
Controls: SES	0.36	0.58	0.45	0.29	0.57
GPA	0.36	0.58	0.45	0.29	0.57
Sex	0.37	0.57	0.45	0.30	0.58
Grade	0.38	0.58	0.45	0.31	0.58
Race	0.37	0.58	0.46	0.30	0.58
All variables	0.36	0.58	0.45	0.30	0.57
Political Threat Composite Indicator	0.19	0.50	0.49	0.14	0.45
Controls: SES	0.19	0.50	0.50	0.15	0.46
GPA	0.20	0.50	0.50	0.15	0.46
Sex	0.19	0.50	0.50	0.14	0.45
Grade	0.21	0.51	0.48	0.16	0.46
Race	0.19	0.51	0.48	0.15	0.45
All variables	0.24	0.52	0.48	0.18	0.48

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

are negligible.

Is irrational ideation related to feelings of political alienation? The correlations in Table 5 provide confirmation for the fifth hypothesis. Irrational beliefs, both personal and political in nature, are related to feelings of political alienation, but apparently to a lesser extent than are the political reality and political threat indicators.[31] Perhaps this is an indication that such irrational beliefs tend to pervade all of an individual's perceptions and cognitions concerning the sociopolitical sphere and, thus, result in a rather uniform rejection of the system on all alienation dimensions. Furthermore, like the political reality and political threat models, the political irrationality model seems to propose that once initiated this process of systemic rejection cannot be transformed, that the nexus between the two sets of variables ultimately come to exert a reciprocal influence on one another and the alienated person can never become allegiant. Finally, the partial correlations in Table 5 show that the political irrationality-political alienation linkage is not affected by controls for race, sex, parental education level, grade-point-average, or grade level.

The sixth model to be tested posits a hypothetical association between cognitive simplicity and felt political alienation. This model assumes that the content and structure of an individual's cognitions and perceptions somehow influence his affective response to the sociopolitical system. The correlations in Table 6 provide no support for this hypothesis. Nor do the demographic-categoric controls assist in saving the hypothesis. Perhaps one reason for this model's failure is that individuals typically require little cognitive differentiation, especially regarding political stimuli, to effectively function within the sociopolitical system. In fact, the argument

TABLE 5. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL IRRATIONALITY AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Personal Irrationality	0.21	0.14	0.12	0.16	0.22
Controls: SES	0.20	0.14	0.12	0.16	0.21
GPA	0.20	0.14	0.12	0.16	0.21
Sex	0.21	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.25
Grade	0.21	0.14	0.12	0.16	0.22
Race	0.21	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.22
All variables	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.15	0.23
Political Irrationality	0.20	0.32	0.17	0.14	0.28
Controls: SES	0.20	0.32	0.16	0.14	0.28
GPA	0.18	0.32	0.16	0.13	0.27
Sex	0.20	0.33	0.17	0.14	0.28
Grade	0.20	0.32	0.17	0.14	0.28
Race	0.20	0.32	0.18	0.14	0.29
All variables	0.18	0.33	0.18	0.12	0.28
Political Irrationality Composite Indicator	0.27	0.29	0.18	0.20	0.32
Controls: SES	0.26	0.29	0.18	0.19	0.32
GPA	0.25	0.29	0.18	0.19	0.31
Sex	0.26	0.32	0.22	0.20	0.34
Grade	0.27	0.29	0.19	0.20	0.32
Race	0.27	0.29	0.20	0.20	0.33
All variables	0.24	0.32	0.23	0.18	0.33

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

TABLE 6. ZERO ORDER AND PARTIAL CORRELATIONS BETWEEN COGNITIVE SIMPLICITY AND POLITICAL ALIENATION INDICATORS

	Political Inefficacy	Policy Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Alienation Composite Indicator
Cognitive Simplicity	-0.03	0.06	0.00	-0.07	-0.02
Controls: SES	-0.02	0.07	0.00	-0.06	-0.01
GPA	-0.02	0.06	0.00	-0.07	-0.01
Sex	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	-0.07	-0.02
Grade	-0.05	0.06	0.01	-0.08	-0.02
Race	-0.03	0.07	0.00	-0.07	-0.02
All variables	-0.02	0.06	-0.01	-0.06	-0.02

NOTE: r= 0.08, p= 0.05

might be reversed and it might be argued that if people did possess highly complex, cognitively differentiated construct systems relevant to the sociopolitical system, they might exhibit even higher levels of political alienation. Thus, cognitive simplicity may to a degree foster psychological ties to the sociopolitical system.

To this point in the analysis, five of the six hypotheses have been supported by the data on the Evansville adolescents. The paramount question to be addressed now concerns the relative influence of these six models on feelings of political alienation among adolescents. This question is answered with reference to the multiple regression results in Table 7.

As is apparent by the results of this analysis, the composite measures for the political reality, political threat, and personal depreciation models manifest almost equal influence on these adolescents' feelings of political alienation, as measured by the composite political alienation indicator. Furthermore, the remaining three composite indicators, those for the life dissatisfaction, irrational belief, and cognitive simplicity models, have very little effect on the dependent variable, accounting for approximately one percent of the variance, while the former indicators account for thirty percent of the variance in the political alienation measure.

How might the political reality, political threat, and personal depreciation concepts be combined in a model of political alienation antecedents? One such proposed model would integrate elements from both the social deprivation and political reality models with the political threat concept. This model would stipulate at least three antecedent conditions be present for an individual to experience feelings of political alienation, i.e., feelings of inefficacy, discontentment, cynicism, and estrangement. First,

TABLE 7. STEP-WISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF POLITICAL ALIENATION PREDICTORS

Variable	Multiple R	R^2	B	Standard Error of B
Political Reality Perceptions	0.42	0.17	0.31	0.05
Political Threat Perceptions	0.49	0.24	0.23	0.05
Personal Depreciation	0.55	0.30	-0.27	0.06
Life Dissatisfaction	0.55	0.30	0.17*	0.10
Irrational Beliefs	0.56	0.31	0.07*	0.05
Cognitive Simplicity	0.56	0.31	0.00*	0.03

* Less than twice its standard error.

personal depreciation, according to this model, would not only have a direct effect on feelings of political alienation, but would also foster critical perceptions and interpretations of sociopolitical reality,[32] as well as feelings of sociopolitical threat. Consistent with the multiple regression results cited above, both critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality and perceptions of political threat would also directly influence feelings of political alienation. In addition, however, critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality would also be expected to generate feelings of political threat.[33] Actually, this latter association would probably be more reciprocal in nature, with reality perceptions affecting threat perceptions, which, in turn, lead to even more selective and critical perceptions of the sociopolitical environment; however, from a temporal vantagepoint, the initial phase of this perception-threat process is probably founded on perceptions of the environment. The causal model in Figure 1 provides a summary of this discussion and of the proposed model.

The path analysis results in Figure 2 indicate that, with one notable exception, this proposed political reality-political threat model is supported by the data on the Evansville adolescents. Thus, as the preceding regression analysis has already shown, personal depreciation, critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality, and perceptions of political threat all have a direct impact on these adolescents' feelings of political alienation. Furthermore, critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality do, in fact, lead to perceptions of political threat; and personal depreciation does contribute to critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality. The only causal link not supported concerns that between personal depreciation and perceptions of political threat. Not only does this finding have unsettling

FIGURE 1. PROPOSED POLITICAL HELPLESSNESS MODEL OF POLITICAL ALIENATION

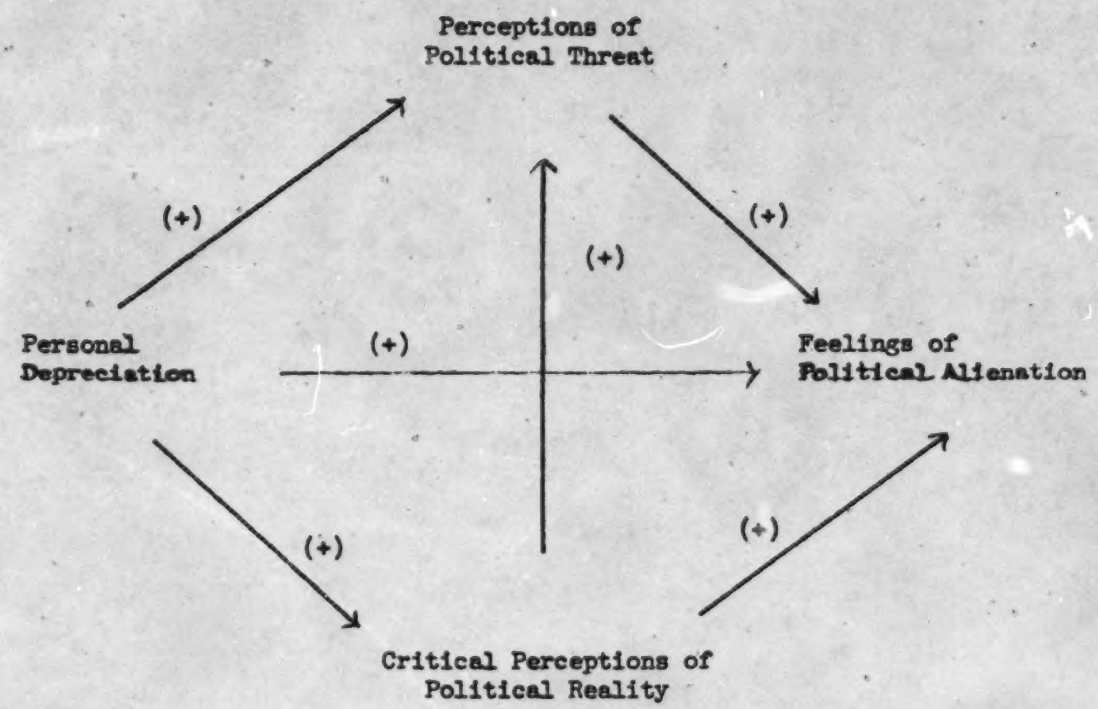
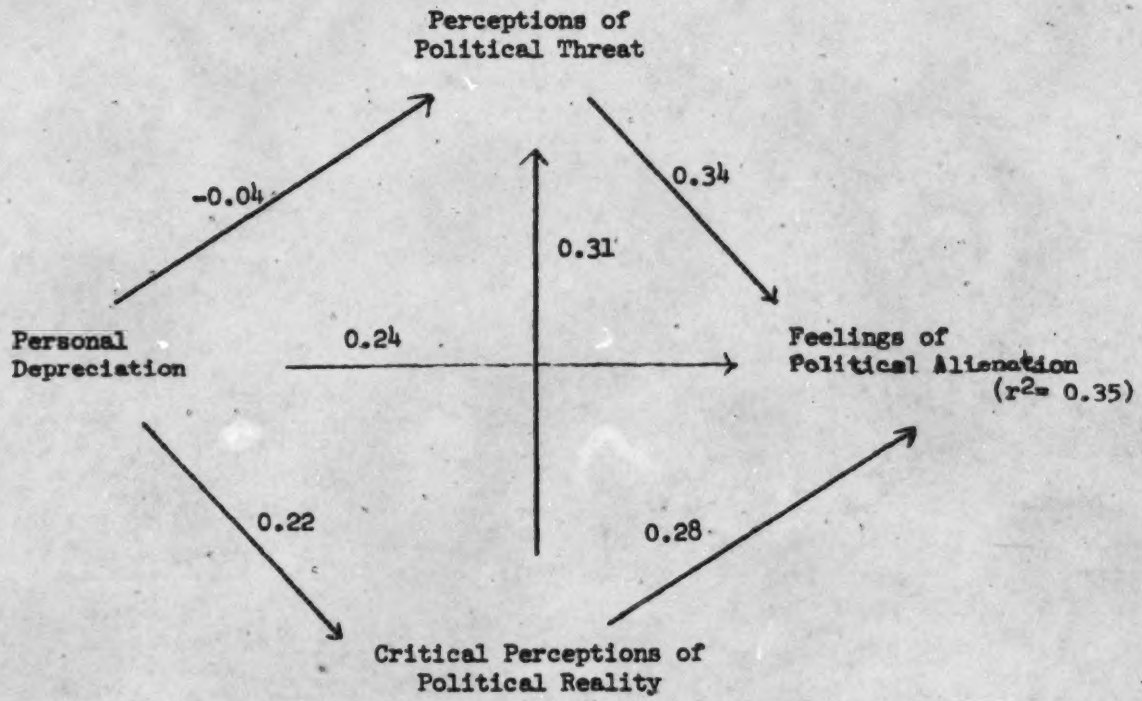


FIGURE 2. PATH ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL HELPLESSNESS MODEL OF POLITICAL ALIENATION



sociopolitical implications regarding the validity of such perceptions, but it also tends to contradict earlier social psychological findings on the antecedents of perceived threat.[34] Indeed, on this point, Lazarus concludes that

> Although level of sophistication does appear, logically, to be nondirectional in its influence on threat appraisal, in general, lack of intellectual resources should increase the prospects of incorrect evaluations of the situation. Moreover, there should be some imbalance in the direction of more unwarranted threat appraisal in the less adequate person, since the dull individual has fewer resources with which to cope with threat and probably less self-confidence in his ability to master danger when it arises.[35]

Two psychological theories seem especially pertinent to the causal model presented in Figure 2. The first of these, psychological reactance theory, is based on the premise that individuals are particularly sensitive to the loss of personal freedom, and that individuals will become aroused and will attempt to protect or restore an actual or threatened loss of freedom.[36] These assumptions are basic to the political threat model, which has been tested here. By way of contrast, the learned helplessness model suggests that individuals will become passive and will experience difficulty initiating a coping response in the face of, in this case, a threat from the sociopolitical milieu.[37] Moreover, reactance theory proposes that if certain freedoms are threatened or actually eliminated, the individual will come to place even more value on them; whereas, the learned helplessness model predicts no evaluative changes to occur in such a situation. Finally, reactance theory deals fundamentally with specific behaviors and freedoms and does not assume that threats to these specific behaviors and freedoms will necessarily generalize to other spheres. Conversely, the learned helplessness model would predict a generalization effect to result, with the individual

learning that he has no control over his environment after he has repeatedly been exposed to situations in which he has been unable to control outcomes.[38]

Although the data in this study of Evansville adolescents do not directly relate to all aspects of these two models, certain speculations would seem to be warranted. First, it would seem that feelings of political alienation among these adolescents constitute a syndrome of interrelated dimensions.[39] Thus, if a respondent scores high on one political alienation scale, he tends also to score high on the other alienation scales as well. Second, data on these adolescents' political orientations and political behavior would seem to indicate that political values and political activism are not dominant in their lives. Nor do they seem overly concerned, particularly as measured by manifestations of overt behavior, with the operations of the sociopolitical system. These speculations would tend to be more congruent with the assumptions inherent in the learned helplessness model.

What implications follow from the application of the learned helplessness model to the political socialization of these preadults? First, the more preadults exhibit external locus of control beliefs, the more they will be predisposed to learned helplessness in the sociopolitical context.[40] Second, the more they conceptualize political influence and social change as resulting from chance circumstances, in contrast to the exertion of specific skills, the more they will conform to the learned helplessness model.[41] Furthermore, social and political passivity will tend to occur across many behavioral spheres and will not be limited to specific spheres.[42] Fourth, if preadults believe their personal skill cannot be brought to bear in achieving success in the sociopolitical arena, it will be very difficult

to teach them that their success in this arena, when it occurs, is, in fact, a function of their skill levels.[43] Fifth, almost by definition, learned helplessness leads to less assertiveness and competitiveness in the socio-political world.[44] Sixth, sociopolitical learned helplessness does dissipate over time, but only when the beliefs underlying the model are not repeatedly reinforced.[45] Seventh, learned helplessness as it applies to sociopolitical behavior can be overcome if the individual is forcibly and repeatedly shown that a nexus exists between his behaviors and outcomes.[46] Last, learned helplessness among preadults can be prevented if early in the political socialization process the preadult is provided with an experiential basis for believing that his efforts have an effect on the operation of his personal sociopolitical system and that threats from that system can be effectively countered or alleviated by his personal actions.[47]

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